

Patrushev: We are interviewing Mr. Ned Shanaman. He was born on July 23rd, 1921. He served in World War II in the Navy from 1940 to 1946. He was a first class machinist. He lives in Richland, Pennsylvania. We are friends of Mr. Shanaman. I am Rebeka Patrushev, and that is Deanna Kunder. The interview is being conducted for the Veterans History Project. Today is March 2nd, 2011.

Kunder: Did you have family already in the war?

Shanaman: No, I was the first one.

Kunder: Who else of your brothers were in the war then?

Shanaman: Well, Lee my second oldest brother, and then Jay, and then Gar, and Ray.

Kunder: And they were all in the Navy?

Shanaman: All in the Navy

Patrushev: What did you do before you enlisted in the Navy?

Shanaman: I packed Betsy Ross potato chips, in Richland.

Patrushev: Why did enlist in the Navy?

Shanaman: Well we both, my buddy and I went to the Marines first, they wouldn't take either one of us, so then I went in the Navy. They took me, but my buddy had flat feet so he went in the Army. And we both ended up in Pearl Harbor.

Kunder: How old were you when you enlisted?

Shanaman: Nineteen. Just, I graduated '39 and in '40 I joined the Navy.

Patrushev: How did you meet your wife?

Shanaman: Haha, at that time, it was patriotic to write to a serviceman, and she was going to business school in Lebanon. And a friend of hers was writing to a serviceman, so she wanted to write to one, so this friend of mine gave her my name, but she didn't tell her where I was from. She wrote and told all about Fredericksburg, and Lebanon County. When I wrote back I told her I was from Richland, and we were rivals in baseball in high school. We wrote together for three and a half years before I got to see her. I left in '40, November 1940, and I never got home again until December 1944.

Kunder: How did your family feel about you leaving for war?

Shanaman: They left me do nearly whatever I wanted to, and it was hard getting a job at that time. The unemployment was high. And I wanted to get out of Richland for a while. So, I enlisted in the Navy.

Patrushev: How old were most of the other men at war?

Shanaman: Most of em', there were five of us out there from Richland when the attack came, and we were all nearly the same age.

Kunder: Did you like have any friendships or anything there? Like did you find someone there that you would talk a lot with?

Shanaman: Well, in the Navy you made friends, and my best buddy was from North Dakota. Scholls. See at that time they didn't give you a choice, they gave you. It was Shanaman, Scholls, Shlaven, Springholm, that's how they picked you. And my lowest mark was Mechanical Aptitude. I did a lot better in History and English, and they said you're going to machinist's school. I

couldn't believe it. So they sent us to Dearborn, Michigan, and to the Henry Ford plant. He had a school there, for the boys whose father worked in the factory. So we went to their school. And that was from first grade up to twelfth grade. And here we were all graduating. I can still see those little children. They'd salute us every time when we walked past em'. They thought this was great having old guys there, and starting with them. But we had a good time there in Dearborn. That's where the main plant was. And we'd walk down the street, and we were the first sailors there. And the young girls would sneak up in back of us and grab our hats. At that time we had flat hats, I don't know if any of you remember them? We didn't have these little white ones you have now and it had US navy on and a lot of, and you'd see a sailor chasing a young girl down the street. Because, you were out of uniform if you didn't have your flat hat on and the shore patrol would pick you up.

Patrushev: Where was this school located? Was it still in PA or was it in another state?

Shanaman: At Dearborn, Michigan it was.

Kunder: Did you miss your friends and family when you were there?

Shanaman: Did I miss them? Oh yes yes.

Kunder: How long were you at that school?

Shanaman: Well I think we spent three months there. Then they sent us back to Newport, Rhode Island. And then they sent us to San Francisco. And while we were at San Francisco, they reassigned us, and I couldn't believe it. They sent us all the way back up to Newport, Rhode Island, to get the ship that I was assigned to. I was assigned to a repair ship, USS Medusa.

Kunder: And that was the ship that you were on for Pearl Harbor?

Shanaman: Yeah, yeah, that was the ship I was on for four years till I got out. That was the four years I was on the Medusa, 1940 to 1944.

Kunder: How did you stay in contact with your friends and family?

Shanaman: Well I don't know if you remember, V-mail. It was if you wrote a letter it took almost a month to get home from the Pacific. And till you got a letter back, it was just a short letter, and then they I don't know how they did it? Through the air, they called it v-mail. But you could only write certain parts. Now I wrote real small so I could put a lot on mine. While those that wrote very large couldn't say very much.

Patrushev: On the USS Medusa, what was the ship's purpose?

Shanaman: That was the biggest repair ship that the Navy had, AR1. Auxiliary Repair #1.

Kunder: And you said there was a reason that you weren't right beside the Arizona when it was bombed. Why was that?

Shanaman: We were very lucky. All the time I was on the Medusa, we were tied up where the Arizona is now but it just so happened that about three days after Thanksgiving the whole fleet went out on war maneuvers. And we weren't supposed to come in until a week before Christmas. For some reason they called off the war maneuvers and told us to return to port but on the way back, going into port, we got orders that the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise needed repairs. So instead of going to our regular berth where the Arizona is, we dropped anchor on the other side of Ford Island and we were waiting for the Enterprise to come in. And luckily the Enterprise was late coming in because if the Enterprise would have been tied up beside of us, we would have really got

bombed. This way the Japanese went after the battleships and the cruisers and they only strafed the auxiliary ships, which is what I was on. So in that case we were really lucky.

Kunder: What was everything like before they got bombed the ships?

Shanaman: Well, it was on a Sunday morning and 8 o'clock. Liberties started and I was in my whites waiting for liberty to start at 8 o'clock. Five minutes of 8 the general alarm goes off. We all looked at each other. Ha, somebody pushed a wrong button. Nobody moved so they pushed the button again and say man your battle stations men, this is no drill this is war. And we looked at each other and said, "What will they think of next to get us to go to battle stations?" And nobody moved. They rang the alarm again and shortly after that we heard a loud noise and a boom and the ship rocked a little. We all moved then. My battle station was on the boat deck aft. That would be the top high part of the ship, at the back end of the ship. And I run up there and when I got there, I couldn't believe all the planes that were flying around and they flew that low, cause nobody was shooting back at them, that you could see the pilots smile at you when they went past. One of the officers came up to me and asked me what my battle station was. I said I was a look out. He said if they can't see them now, they're blind. I said, I agree with you. He said the ammunition hoist broke down. Go down to the magazines, which was the lowest deck on the ship and help carry ammunition up to the three-inch gun. I was glad for that. I run down five decks and while I'm waiting down there, comes over the loudspeaker "Submarine, dead astern". Then I wanted to be on topside. So I grabbed my three-inch shell and run up and when I get up there, right off our fantail, which is the back end of the ship, here this two-man submarine came up. Well our ship was right there and we put a shell right through the cunning tower and that took care of the submarine.

Patrushev: You said there was a mini-submarine at your ship...

Shanaman: Well you see, it was a two-man submarine, and it slipped into the harbor without being seen. And when it came into harbor, it lost its position and it came up right in the back end of our ship. And then we could see the cunning tower, so our ship put a shell right through the cunning tower.

Kunder: And where were you at the time?

Shanaman: Where was I? I was on the boat deck gaffed and I saw everything. Because that's where it happened, at the back end of the ship.

Patrushev: What did you do after you sunk the mini-submarine?

Shanaman: Well, then the planes came after us. That is, the submarine followed us first, but then there were that many Japanese planes flying around, and they flew that low because nobody was firing back at them. But after, say four or five minutes, when we got ammunition up and we started firing after them, then the planes didn't come down that low any more. So, most of the damage was done in the first five or ten minutes.

Kunder: Well, after that happened, like the whole submarine thing happened, where did you go after that?

Shanaman: Well, when it ended, we couldn't believe it. We just sat there shaking our heads and wondering what was going to happen next. And nothing did happen, but we didn't know this, that the Japanese fleet had left. So they that night they took one man of each ship and put them along the harbor that you had to be a lookout. We were afraid. See, there were a lot of Japanese living on the island, and we didn't know if they were friends of them or friends of ours. But it happened that they were all friends of ours,

and there were no unfriendly Japanese there. And that was all night long that we had patrol until the next morning.

Patrushev: When you guys were on the ship, like did you guys have any guns or anything to take down the planes or were you guys strictly to submarines?

Shanaman: No, yeah, we had two 50-caliber machine guns. I wasn't on them, but they were manned by our ship. On our ship and they fired at them. But like I say, most of the damage was done before we even got ammunition up there to fire back at them. In that first, say, fifteen minutes, they sank at least five battle ships, and did a lot of damage at landing at the dry docks. The USS Pennsylvania was in the dry dock with two destroyers, and those two destroyers were demolished, but the Pennsylvania was on the machine gun. So, after the Japanese left, they flooded the dry dock again so that the Pennsylvania could leave.

Patrushev: Did the Medusa get any damage from the planes?

Shanaman: Only machine gun fire. Its

Patrushev: What was the island like when you first got there? Was it beautiful and like a paradise?

Shanaman: Hawaii, oh yeah, yeah. The weather was the same nearly all year around. It's right near the tropics, so you wore whites all the time. After that, we used to go ashore but after the war started everything was closed up and everything so hardly any of us went ashore after that. Of course we were only there after that, I think four months after the war started and then we were sent in the South Pacific. We went, I was anywhere from Pearl Harbor to Sydney Australia and all the way up to Sassapo, Japan and every island in between.

Patrushev: Were there civilians near the port at Pearl Harbor?

Shanaman: Oh yeah, yeah.

Patrushev: How did they react to the Japanese bombing?

Shanaman: Well see we never got in...the civilians weren't allowed on the Navy base. And actually, after the war started, we hardly ever got into the city anymore. But we soon left Pearl Harbor and like I say, we were all over the Pacific. But when we got into Sydney, Australia...the reason we got to Sydney, Australia, which was lucky. We were at New Guinea and we had a terrible thunderstorm, that night. In fact, they made us all go below because of the lightning and everything. So we went down below decks and the next morning the ship was ready to leave so our captain heads the ship right between the buoys and it happened that the storm was that strong that it moved the buoys and the captain said full speed ahead, which was 10 knots and we start going and all at once you heard this screech and scrunch. Here we run aground on a reef. It moved the buoys away from the opening and we sat on that reef for two and a half days until the tug come there to pull us off. The tug finally came and pulled us off and we were glad of one thing if a ship runs aground it was supposed to go into dry dock as soon as it can. Well there was no dry dock close by except for Sydney, Australia and that's how we got to Sydney, Australia.

Kunder: And what was it like in Sydney?

Shanaman: In Sydney, ah, that's the most beautiful harbor in the world, Sydney. We couldn't believe it when we pulled in there. There were a lot of ferries going back and forth and we couldn't believe it, whenever our ship went past, everybody on that ferry stood there and saluted, which in the United States they didn't do that but the Australians were that glad that we were down there

helping them that they treated us like.... You couldn't buy anything. If you went ashore there, they got everything for you. In fact, I'll never forget, when we pulled into Sydney, huh, we looked up on the bank there and there were girls up there waving. We thought they were waving at us and finally one of the signalmen said, hey that's Semaphore. You know the signal men could send messages that way and the one of them looked and here they had, meet me at the Trocedaro. Meet me at the Trocedaro so when we landed. When we went ashore we said, where's the Trocedaro and one of the young kids told us where it was and we went there and here it was the Australians had set up a movie theater with a dance band and the stage revolved. And they ran that 24-hours a day with a dance band up there. They played so long and then the stage turned around and another band came out and you could go in there and dance anytime you wanted. The Australians really treated us good. I sat down in Hyde Park. While I was sitting there a guy sat down beside me. We were talking there for awhile and all at once he looks at me and he said are you from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I look at him and I'm in Sydney Australia and he asks if I'm from Lancaster Pennsylvania. I looked at him and he said I'm a preacher and I preached in Lancaster County and he said that Dutch accent I'll know anywhere. Hahaha and you'd be surprised if you go to a stranger place, it happened to me a couple times, they asked me how long I live in the United States with the accent that we have. They figured we were from Germany. Yeah we had quite an experience. Australia's really a nice place, down there.

Patrushev: From where the Medusa was, could you see the Arizona sink?

Shanaman: Did I see it sink? Yeah. Well I was on topside most of the time. Like I say, we were lucky. They went after the battleships and the cruisers first and I saw, well, nearly all the battleships were sunk. The Pennsylvania was in dry dock luckily and there were

two destroyers ahead of them and you have the pictures of it. The two destroyers were completely demolished but the battleship wasn't damaged. And after awhile they flooded it and the Pennsylvania pulled out of dry dock.

Kunder: Did the people treat you differently after you came back from the war?

Shanaman: Well yeah. See I didn't get home for four years and it was in December then. When I got back and like I say there were people here that I didn't even know anymore. That's in four years, things change. But my family was still here so.

Kunder: Oh and then you said, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Shanaman: I have nine brothers, well nine boys and five girls in the family and they all have three letter names. My dad said he did that so he could call us all in one breath. It was Ned, Lee, Fay, Jay, Lou, Gar, Lyn, Dal, Ray, Ana, Ria, Ken, Ann and Joy.

Kunder: So then you said after Pearl Harbor you went to Sydney, Australia, where did you go after that?

Shanaman: Oh geez, like I say I was on every major island from Sydney, Australia to Sasebo, Japan. We were on the first ship that went into Sasebo, Japan and the army guys told the Japanese that they should be very careful that we would rape their women and then beat their children. Well when we pulled in, nobody was on the docks. But after awhile the children started coming out and here during the war Hershey started making chocolate bars that didn't melt. We called them paraffin bars but they had a flat chocolate flavor to it so we loaded our pockets and we went ashore and the young children came out first and we gave them these chocolate bars. Well you couldn't believe how that brought the children out and then after awhile the women started coming out

because they saw we didn't hurt their children and then after awhile the men came out too and we made friends with the Japanese. They were told, like I say, that we would be cruel to them and they didn't believe how good we did treat them. In fact we left, we unloaded the first Marine Division into Sasebo, then we went down to the Philippines and picked up another detachment and brought them back to Sasebo too. That was the biggest naval base Japan had, Sasebo.

Patrushev: Did anyone at Japan know English? Or did they all speak Japanese?

Shanaman: A few of them could understand English, but most of 'em, it was sign language you used to communicate and at that, at that time the Japanese, the women, they had to bow to the men. And whenever you would walk by the women, they would always bow to you, and after awhile we would shake our heads you know to, they shouldn't do this. And after a while they stopped doing it, and from then on they didn't do it to their own men. Yeah we made good friends with the Japanese. Even though we couldn't understand them. But it was all sign language.

Kunder: Was Pearl Harbor the only place you were actually like in a war?

Shanaman: Well no we were like down in New Guinea. Air raids. But nowhere it was like ship to ship. It was just air raids that flew and dropped bombs. The worst one we had was, we had gone down to the Philippines, to Leusan. And we were on the way up to Japan and out to Okinawa. We got into a typhoon. I'll never forget that. We were doing ten knots forward when the typhoon ended. We were twenty miles back from when we started. And I was on half steering. That's the back of the ship. That's were you really, I mean it was like an elevator you were up and then down up and then down. Where if you were in the middle of the ship it wasn't

too bad. But if you were on the front or the back, then it was really rough. And then every hour on the hour, you had to go all the way down to the shaft alley, which was from the main engine to the screw. And you had to go down there and oil the bearings. And that used to be quite a trip climbing down there. And while you were down there it was nice because you were on the back but as soon as you were back up on the top you really swung around. Yeah that's the worst part on any ship. Well, I shouldn't say that that was the worst, but one time we went into Seattle Washington. Ground Wells. I never ran into that, we'd be going into Seattle that ship would go way up and then go down. When you looked, the water was, that's all you'd see water. Then you would be up, then you would go down. That was a rough ride going into Seattle.

Patrushev: What kind of food did you drink? I mean well eat and then what did you drink.

Shanaman: Well you could almost tell what day of the week it was by what you ate. Like every Tuesday you'd have this, well like I said you could almost tell what day of the week it was by what you ate. We had good meals. That's one thing we had in the Navy. You had good meals, that poor Army, they never knew what they were gonna get.

Deanna: How many, or were there any other people from Richland or Pennsylvania on your ship?

Shanaman: No I was the only one on the medusa, like I said there were five of us from Richland, in Hawaii. But most of them were on the land and I was the only one on the ship Pearl Harbor was really a nice harbor, when you go in, oh I'd say it's at least a half a mile coming it's like a channel coming in like a channel coming in and then when you get in you can go all the way around, and the island is right in the, Rhode Island is the name of it, and that's where the Navy, uh a Navy carrier never carried their planes into

the harbor. The planes flew in and landed on the land and then the carrier came in so this Rhode Island was where the planes landed on the Carriers while they were in port.

Kunder: Did you ever go back to Hawaii then?

Shanaman: Haha on the twenty first anniversary my wife and I went back. And that was, that morning, on December 7th three of us had arranged a taxicab to take a trip around the island. It took almost a day to go around, well five minutes of eight the attack came so we never. So twenty-five years later, I and my wife finally made that trip around the island. And she liked that.

Kunder: And that was the first time she was there then?

Shanaman: Yeah, see I told you that we wrote together for four years before I got to see her. That doesn't often happen.

Kunder: What was it like when you first saw who she was when you came back?

Shanaman: I can close my eyes and see her to this day. She lived at the Woman's Club in Lebanon. See she lived in Fredericksburg actually, but she worked for an insurance company in Lebanon. So she stayed at the, do you know where they live in the Woman's Club? Well she lived in the top floor. And when I went there the first time, I rang the doorbell and then the guy that takes care of the place answered, and I told him who I was. So he rings a bell, and you know I can close my eyes and still see her coming down those steps. Well like I said we wrote together for three and a half years, and that was the first time I got to see her. She wanted to get married right away. I said no way. Not till I get out of the Navy. So I was discharged on the 12th of November, and on the 24th we got married.

Kunder: If there's anything you want to add?

Shanaman: I remember sitting there after it was all over, and I couldn't believe all the damage that was done. And I was hoping we'd leave and go back to the states, not knowing that they weren't coming back again. But luckily, they came and then they didn't trust coming back a second time. So, we were safe, but we didn't know that at the time. That was December 7th, and we stayed there until the June of the next year. And then most of the damage was fixed. And we left Pearl Harbor.